

10 Utah companies honored as best to work for

By **Jenifer K. Nii**

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From pharmaceuticals and health insurance to composite manufacturing solutions and mineral development, Utah's "Best Companies to Work For" are a diverse group.

The Utah Department of Workforce Services on Tuesday named the 10 winners of its annual work/life award. According to the department, the award recognizes "companies that go above and beyond normal business operations to create a sustainable workplace culture that provides meaningful support to employees, their families and their communities."

Lynette Rasmussen, director of the department's office of child care, said each of the 2005 winners is an example.

"I think that all of the winning companies — though they range in size, in industry, in geographic region — have one thing in common: they've found what their employees need, what they need from their employees, and how to align these needs to their business strategy," Rasmussen said.

This year's winners are:

- 1-800-Contacts, Draper.
- ARUP Laboratories, Salt Lake City.
- Employer Solutions Group, Orem.
- Futura Industries, Clearfield.
- Nicholas & Co., Salt Lake City.
- NPS Pharmaceuticals, Salt Lake City.
- Radius Engineering, Salt Lake City.
- Redmond Minerals, Springville.
- Regence BlueCross BlueShield of Utah, Salt Lake City.
- Sunshine Terrace Foundation, Logan.

Most of the 2005 honorees are multi-year winners, including 1-800-Contacts, ARUP and Regence BlueCross BlueShield. Employer Solutions Group, NPS Pharmaceuticals and Radius Energy are new.

Utah Gov. Jon M. Huntsman Jr. said companies that are recognized for fostering a positive work environment help attract other businesses to the state.

Rasmussen said the department can document bottom-line benefits for the employees and employers that implement work/life strategies.

"We ask about turnover, we ask about absenteeism, and we know that it affects the bottom line," she said. "Companies that have flexible work arrangements have lower turnover. Companies that provide child care have less absenteeism. Companies that offer benefits to part-time workers have a greater pool from which to recruit."

Newcomer Radius Engineering Inc., a Salt Lake manufacturer of composite materials for everything from ski poles to aircraft parts, has just 17 employees and is the smallest company on the list. As such, Radius can't afford to offer child care at its new ergonomic and "green" factory, but it lets employees work flexible hours and take time off for family emergencies.

"The point is to support families, to help people who need or choose to work from home feel great about what they're doing," Rasmussen said. "But also, the point is to enable people to care for their children at home, or care for an aging parent. In today's world, work and family life are combined. There's so much overlap. What I think these awards do is recognize companies that are doing terrific things, which benefit our economy, which ultimately benefits our families here in Utah."

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